

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE (SACRUM ROMANUM IMPERIUM, HEILIGES RÖMISCHES REICH)

The deposition of Romulus Augustulus had terminated the Western Roman Empire in 476, and in legal fiction all imperial authority now passed to the Eastern Roman emperors ruling from Constantinople. Over the next three centuries Rome came under increasing papal authority, which clashed with that of the distant emperor on various theological and political grounds. This widening rift, coupled with the pope's repeated reliance on the Carolingian kings of the Franks for protection against rivals in Italy, led to Pope Leo III's coronation of the Frankish king Charles I (Charlemagne) as emperor at Rome in 800. This constituted a *translatio imperii* from the Romans to the Carolingians and their successors. This renewed empire came to be called Holy Empire (*Sacrum Imperium*) by 1157, Holy Roman Empire (*Sacrum Romanum Imperium*) by 1254, and Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (*Sacrum Imperium Romanum Nationis Germanicae*) by 1450.

The imperial succession was perceived as at least partly subject to election (corresponding to both Roman and Frankish notions of charismatic monarchy). Even when a designated and unchallenged successor was available, imperial status had to be conferred by the pope, although the second and third emperors were actually first crowned by their respective fathers. Therefore, until crowned by the pope, a monarch remained only king of the Franks or, in later German medieval practice, "king of the Romans." With the disintegration of the Carolingian empire and the extinction of the male line of Carolingian monarchs in Italy (875), the imperial title passed, with several interruptions, to rulers of the West Franks ("France" 875–877), the East Franks ("Germany" 881–887 and 896–899), and various Italian potentates (891–924). After a hiatus of almost four decades, in 962 Pope Ioannes XII crowned the German king Otto I (936–973) emperor. From this point on the imperial title remained connected with kingdom of Germany, although several German kings failed to secure an imperial coronation (most notably in the period 1250–1308). Administratively speaking, the empire was now composed of the kingdoms of Germany, Italy, and (from 1032) Burgundy, all ruled in personal union by the successors of Otto I. (The duchy of Bohemia was made a hereditary kingdom in 1198 but it was not ruled in personal union with the older constituent kingdoms except by dynastic inheritance.)

Starting with the Investiture Controversy between Emperor Heinrich IV (1056–1105) and Pope Gregorius VII, the *de facto* hereditary succession was undermined, and the state evolved into an elective monarchy in spite of the efforts of the Hohenstaufen (1138–1254). Subsequently the right to elect an emperor became vested in a limited number of secular and ecclesiastic princes, an arrangement crystallized in the Golden Bull of Emperor Karl IV (1346–1378) from 1356. During the reign of Ludwig V (IV as emperor, 1314–1347) it was decided that the elected king of Germany may use the imperial title even if the pope refused to crown him emperor. This decision was put into practice in 1508, when Maximilian I (1493–1519) assumed the imperial title at Trent and decreed that a monarch was emperor from the time of his election; Karl V (1519–1556) was the last to bother with a papal coronation (1530). The Habsburg dynasty monopolized the throne from 1438. The Protestant Reformation and the Treaty of Augsburg (1555) further eroded imperial authority over the German principalities, as it provided local rulers with the freedom of choosing between Catholicism and Lutheranism as the religion of their subjects. The last vestiges of actual imperial power as such were swept away by the Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). Franz II took the title emperor of Austria in 1804, and in 1806 abdicated as Holy Roman emperor.

The neo-Roman emperors were called *Imperator* and *Augustus* in Latin and *Kaiser* in German. The kings of the Franks were designated as *rex Francorum*, but by the 11th century they were called *Romanorum rex* until crowned emperor by the pope. The list below includes all monarchs crowned (until 1530) or elected (from 1508) as Roman emperors in the west; after 1519 the reigns of emperors-elect correspond entirely with their reigns as Roman kings. Roman kings who did not secure an imperial coronation before 1508 are not listed. Indicated periods of kingship exclude association on the throne, and from 1039 they combine the titles to the German, Italian, and Burgundian kingdoms. The names of emperors are presented in standard Latin forms.

Emperors of the Romans

Carolingian House

800–814	Carolus I, <i>the Great</i> ¹ ... son of king Pépin of the Franks; Franks 768–814; Italy 774–781
814–833	Ludovicus I, <i>the Pious</i> ... son of Carolus I; associated 813; also Franks; Italy 818–820; deposed
833–834	Lotharius I ... son of Ludovicus I; associated 817; Italy 820–839; deposed
834–840	Ludovicus I, <i>the Pious</i> ... restored; also Franks
840–855	Lotharius I ... restored; Middle Francia 843–855

¹ Canonized as saint 1165.

- 855–875 Ludovicus II ... son of Lotharius I; associated 850; Italy 839–875; Provence 863–875
- 875–877 Carolus II, *the Bald* ... son of Ludovicus I; France 843–877; Italy and Provence 875–877
- 881–887 Carolus III, *the Fat* ... son of king Ludwig II of Germany, son of Ludovicus I; Germany 876–887; Italy 879–887; France 884–887; deposed, died 888
- Guidonid House of Spoleto*
- 891–894 Guido ... son of duke Guido I of Spoleto, son of duke Lamberto I by daughter of king Pipino of Italy, son of Carolus I; Italy 889–891
- 894–898 Lambertus ... son of Giudo; associated 892; Italy 891–898
- Carolingian House*
- 896–899 Arnulphus, *of Carinthia* ... bastard son of king Karlmann II of Germany, brother of Carolus III; Germany 887–899; Italy 896
- Bosonid House of Metz*
- 901–905 Ludovicus III, *the Blind* ... son of king Boson of Provence by Ermengarda, daughter of Ludovicus II; Provence 887–928; Italy 900–905; deposed, died 928
- Unruochid House of Friuli*
- 915–924 Berengarius ... son of duke Everardo of Friuli by Gisella, daughter of Ludovicus I; Italy 888–924
- Liudolfing House of Saxony*
- 962–973 Otto I, *the Great* ... son of king Heinrich I of Germany; Germany 936–973; Italy 963–973
- 973–983 Otto II, *the Red* ... son of Otto I; associated 967; also Germany and Italy
- 996–1002 Otto III ... son of Otto I; Germany and Italy 983–1002
- 1014–1024 Henricus II, *the Holy* ²... son of duke Heinrich II of Bavaria, son of duke Heinrich I, brother of Otto I; Germany and Italy 1002–1024
- Salian House of Franconia*
- 1027–1039 Conradus II ³... son of count Heinrich of Speyer, son of duke Otto I of Carinthia, son of duke Konrad I of Lorraine by Liudgard, daughter of Otto I; Germany and Italy 1024–1039; Burgundy 1032–1039
- 1046–1056 Henricus III, *the Black* ... son of Conradus II; king 1039–1056
- 1183–1105 Henricus IV ... son of Henricus III; king 1056–1105; deposed, died 1106
- 1111–1125 Henricus V ... son of Henricus IV; king 1105–1125
- House of Supplinburg*
- 1133–1137 Lotharius II ... son of count Gebhard of Supplinburg; king 1125–1137
- Hohenstaufen House of Swabia*
- 1155–1190 Fridericus I, *Barbarossa* ... son of duke Friedrich II of Swabia; king 1152–1190
- 1191–1197 Henricus VI ... son of Fridericus I; king 1190–1197
- Welf House of Brunswick*
- 1209–1215 Otto IV ... son of duke Heinrich III of Saxony, son of duke Heinrich II by Gertrud, daughter of Lotharius II; king 1208–1215; deposed, died 1218
- Hohenstaufen House of Swabia*
- 1220–1250 Fridericus II ... son of Henricus VI; king 1197–1198 and 1215–1250; Sicily 1197–1250
- House of Luxemburg*
- 1312–1313 Henricus VII ... son of count Henri VI of Luxembourg; king 1308–1313
- House of Wittelsbach (Bavaria)*
- 1328–1347 Ludovicus IV ... son of duke Ludwig II of Upper Bavaria; king 1314–1347
- House of Luxemburg (Bohemia)*
- 1355–1378 Carolus IV ... son of king Jan of Bohemia, son of Henricus VII; king 1347–1378; Bohemia 1346–1378
- 1433–1437 Sigismundus ... son of Carolus IV; king 1410–1437; Hungary 1387–1437; Bohemia 1419–1437

² Canonized as saint 1146; the numbering of emperors named Henricus includes king Heinrich I of Germany (919–936).

³ The numbering of emperors named Conradus includes king Konrad I of Germany (911–918)

House of Habsburg (Austria)

- 1452–1493 Fridericus III ... son of duke Ernst of Styria; king 1440–1493
- 1508–1519 Maximilianus I ... son of Fridericus III; king 1493–1519
- 1519–1556 Carolus V ... son of king Felipe I of Castile, son of Maximilianus I; crowned 1530; Spain 1516–1556; Naples and Sicily 1516–1554; abdicated, died 1558
- 1558–1564 Ferdinandus I ... brother of Carolus V; king 1556–1564; Bohemia and Hungary 1526–1564
- 1564–1576 Maximilianus II ... son of Ferdinandus I; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1576–1612 Rudolphus II ⁴... son of Maximilianus II; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1612–1619 Matthias ... son of Maximilianus II; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1619–1637 Ferdinandus II ... son of duke Karl of Styria, son of Ferdinandus I; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1637–1657 Ferdinandus III ... son of Ferdinandus II; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1658–1705 Leopoldus I ... son of Ferdinandus III; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1705–1711 Iosephus I ... son of Leopoldus I; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1711–1740 Carolus VI ... son of Leopoldus I; also Bohemia and Hungary

House of Wittelsbach (Bavaria)

- 1742–1745 Carolus VII ... son of elector Maximilian II of Bavaria; husband of Maria Amalie, daughter of Iosephus I

House of Habsburg-Lorraine (Austria)

- 1745–1765 Franciscus I ... son of duke Léopold-Joseph of Lorraine; husband of Maria Theresia, daughter of Carolus VI
- 1765–1790 Iosephus II ... son of Franciscus I; Bohemia and Hungary 1780–1790
- 1790–1792 Leopoldus II ... son of Franciscus I; also Bohemia and Hungary
- 1792–1806 Franciscus II ... son of Leopoldus II; abdicated; Bohemia and Hungary 1792–1835; emperor of Austria 1804–1835
(dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire 1806)

⁴ The numbering of emperors named Rudolphus includes king Rudolf I of Germany (1273–1291).